

St. John Fisher College

Fisher Digital Publications

Pharmacy Faculty/Staff Publications

Wegmans School of Pharmacy

12-2013

Acquisition of Medication for Short-Term Medical Mission Trips

Christine R. Birnie

St. John Fisher College, cbirnie@sjfc.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/pharmacy_facpub



Part of the [Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences Commons](#)

[How has open access to Fisher Digital Publications benefited you?](#)

Publication Information

Birnie, Christine R. (2013). "Acquisition of Medication for Short-Term Medical Mission Trips." *Christianity & Pharmacy* 16.2, 22-26.

Please note that the Publication Information provides general citation information and may not be appropriate for your discipline. To receive help in creating a citation based on your discipline, please visit <http://libguides.sjfc.edu/citations>.

This document is posted at https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/pharmacy_facpub/375 and is brought to you for free and open access by Fisher Digital Publications at St. John Fisher College. For more information, please contact fisherpub@sjfc.edu.

Acquisition of Medication for Short-Term Medical Mission Trips

Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, here is the article's first paragraph:

Each year, increasing numbers of pharmacists and pharmacy students participate in medical mission trips around the world. The Christian Pharmacist Fellowship International (CPFI) partners with Global Health Outreach (GHO) to ensure that one or two pharmacists are included on each of their multi-disciplinary medical trips. Over the past years, the number of pharmacists participating on these trips has increased from 20 pharmacists in 2002 to 78 pharmacists in 2012.¹ In recent years, pharmacy students have also become active team members, and several schools are now organizing medical mission projects directly from their institutions.

Disciplines

Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

Comments

This article was originally published in *Christianity and Pharmacy*, 14(4):22-26, 2013. It can also be viewed on the publisher's website: https://www.cphi.org/assets/docs/c-and-p/2013/cp_2013v16_2_p22-26.pdf

forthcoming for the improved health and well-being of the AIDS patients now and ultimately for the advancement of His Kingdom on earth. In a country that has seen little hope except for that provided by the Gospel and the resulting transformed lives, this project will provide an additional glimmer of hope for many individual AIDS patients, as well as all those who do not have access to high quality medicines at affordable prices delivered with God's love.

In addition, the exclusive participation by the local church and active involvement of the CPFI-DRC pharmacists, will provide much needed encouragement to those who have

given themselves faithfully in service to the Lord, as well as advancing the pharmacy profession. As a result the credibility and professional stature of the CPFI-DRC pharmacists will be a visible testimony for all to see. Most people in the DRC have never seen a real health center and pharmacy, functioning as they are capable of doing. The "wow factor" will provide an excellent opportunity to explain the reason behind such services.

Personally I have been encouraged as well by the hope provided from these verses of Scripture:

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, say the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil,

to give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11, NKJV)

"... The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." (Revelation 22:2b, NKJV)

References

1. ThinkExist.com Quotations. "Charles R. Swindoll quotes". ThinkExist.com. http://en.thinkexist.com/quotes/charles_r._swindoll/Quotations. Accessed October 1, 2013 and November 8, 2013.

Acquisition of Medication

for Short-Term Medical Mission Trips by Christine Birnie, RPh, PhD

A cheerful heart is good medicine ... Proverbs 17:22(NIV)



Christine R Birnie RPh PhD, is Associate Professor and Chair in the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences at St John Fisher College in Rochester, NY. Each year, Dr Birnie organizes medical mission trips for pharmacy and other health profession students. She is a regular speaker on the topic at such conferences as the Global Missions Health Conference in Louisville, KY. Dr Birnie is currently involved in mission projects in both El Salvador and India, but has led projects in seven countries over the last 15 years. She has served as a board member and on the leadership team for

the CPFI from 2003 – 2011, and was a 2008 recipient of the Warren Weaver Service Award. In 2013, she was awarded a Fulbright Scholar Fellowship Grant to India.

Each year, increasing numbers of pharmacists and pharmacy students participate in medical mission trips around the world. The Christian Pharmacist Fellowship International (CPFI) partners with Global Health Outreach (GHO) to ensure that one or two pharmacists are included on each of their multi-disciplinary medical

trips. Over the past years, the number of pharmacists participating

on these trips has increased from 20 pharmacists in 2002 to 78 pharmacists in 2012.¹ In recent years, pharmacy students have also become active team members, and several schools are now organizing medical mission projects directly from their institutions.

Although pharmacists and pharmacy students on these teams usually have the responsibility of dispensing medications and counseling patients or caregivers about treatments, many are also involved in preparing the formulary and acquiring the medications needed for the team's work. If the pharmacist is given these responsibilities for the trip, a drug formulary should first be prepared and the quantities of various medications needed should be determined. To ensure that all of the health needs of the desired specialties are met, these preparations should be done in collaboration with the other practitioners on the team. Older, relatively simple medications are preferred, because many developing nations do not have newer and more expensive medication readily available, nor are they often needed. For example, the same levels of antibiotic

drug resistance are not present in developing countries as are often seen in the United States. Many of the medications must be purchased, so choosing agents with generic equivalents is more cost effective. It is also important to note that over the counter (OTC) items and non-medical health and hygiene items may also be needed and should be added to the formulary or supply listing. Some of the most common items recommended for short-term medical mission trips are included in Table 1. If patients are also being treated for chronic diseases, then medication for diabetes, hypertension, dyslipidemia and depression may also be added.

In an effort to acquire medications in the most cost effective manner, it is helpful to identify sources for donated drugs and other health care items needed for the team. Possibilities may include practitioners, sales representatives, store owners, and other personal contacts with access to available resources who can donate these supplies. Many of the OTC, health and hygiene items can also be acquired through these sources. For example, dentists are a good resource for donations of toothbrushes or toothpaste, and pharmacy managers may supply OTC items or

vitamins. Team members should approach their churches or para-church organizations that are supportive of the team's efforts. By providing a list of needed items to these groups, interested individuals may be led to purchase and donate some items. To prevent complications in the Customs process, expired medication or controlled substances should not be accepted.

There are a few organizations that provide medication for short term trips free of cost. These cost-saving opportunities will sometimes only be offered for a limited period, and it may be difficult to maintain an updated list of these organizations. Two well-established programs that provide medication free of cost are Kingsway Charities and the Johnson and Johnson Medical Missions Pack Program through MAP International. Details of these programs are listed in Table 2. Both groups have some limitations, and orders for needed items must be placed many months in advance of the trip.

After a conscientious effort has been made to acquire as many donated medications as possible, there will still be items that must be purchased to complete the formulary

Table 1: Commonly used medications and supplies on short term medical mission trips

<i>Medications</i>	<i>Supplies</i>
Antibiotics	Blood Pressure Cuffs/Machines
Analgesics/ Anti-inflammatory	Glucose monitor and strips
Multivitamins – Adult and Pediatric	Gloves
Cold and Cough Preparations	Antimicrobial Hand Gel
Topical Creams: Antibiotic, Antifungal, Anti-inflammatory	Alcohol Swabs
Antihistamines	Pregnancy Tests
Parasiticidals	First Aid Supplies
H2 Blockers/Antacids	Thermometer (Temporal or Equiv)
Anti-diarrheals	Weighing Scale
Iron Supplements	Dispensing trays/Spatulas
Inhalers	Medication Baggies/Labels
Ophthalmics – medicated and non-medicated	Medicine Cups/Spoons/Syringes
	Tongue Depressors
	Pill Cutter or Crusher
	Mortar and Pestle
	Graduated Cylinder (Plastic)
	Soaps/Shampoos/Lotions
	Toothbrushes/Toothpaste

and supply listing. These can be acquired from a number of different organizations, many of whom provide mission groups with medication at greatly reduced costs. Table 3 lists some of the most commonly used suppliers for medical mission trips. In addition to these sources for medication, there are numerous other organizations that assist mission groups with their medication and supply needs. Table 4 lists some additional organizations that may be useful.

Regardless of the source of the medication, it is essential that we, as pharmacists, appropriately manage and handle the medication under whatever conditions are encountered by the team. Every effort should be made to keep the medication in the original bottle and away from extreme heat. Supplies and medication should be packaged and transported under the best conditions reasonably possible for your mission project, and they should be stored

in a secure location. Before the return home, a plan for proper disposal, storage, or distribution of the medication and supplies should be arranged. This may involve a local health care facility. Medication donated or purchased to be used for a designated international medical mission must not be transported back into the United States.

As pharmacists, it is imperative that we assist our mission teams in the appropriate planning and acquisition of medication and supplies that will be the most appropriate and cost effective to meet our patient's needs.

This information was first presented at the Global Missions Health Conference in 2004 and in updated forms in 2007 and 2010. An audio version of the presentation can be heard at: <https://www.medicalmissions.com/community/members/christine-birnie>.

Table 2: Medication and supplies available free of cost

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Contact Information</i>	<i>Details</i>
Kingsway Charities	www.kingswaycharities.org	Supplies various medications. \$25 service fee. To be used for domestic and international missions. Must be 501(c)(3) organization with an evangelical mission.
Johnson and Johnson Medical Missions Pack Program (Supplied through MAP International)	www.map.org/johnsonandjohnson	Provides "Medical Mission Pack" of over the counter items. Free with \$50.00 shipping fee, includes meds averaging around \$800.00 wholesale.

Table 3: Commonly used suppliers of medication for medical mission projects

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Contact Information</i>	<i>Details</i>
Blessings International	Phone: 918-250-8101 E-mail: info@blessing.org Web: www.blessing.org	“Medicine for Missions” is their slogan. They provide pharmaceuticals and other medical supplies for needy patients in developing countries and U.S. clinics. The usual service charge is about 10% or less of the value of their goods.
PractRx	Contact Person: Keisha Jackson Phone: 855.772.2879 x 74423 or Jerry Head x 75162	Supplies meds for significantly reduced costs. Preferred physician pricing with no contract needed. Access to short-dated medication at reduced rates. Ships overnight.
MAP International	Phone: 800-225-8550 E-mail: map@map.org Web: www.map.org	Provides customized medication packs for overseas medical mission projects
International Dispensary Association (IDA)	Slochterweg 35 1027 AA, Amsterdam, The Netherlands Telephone: + 31 20 4033051 E-mail: info@idafoundation.org Web: www.idafoundation.org	Supplies medication for overseas projects for reduced costs.

Table 4: Additional Resources

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Contact Information</i>	<i>Details</i>
IMA World Health	P.O. Box 429 New Windsor, MD 21776 Phone: 877-241-7952 imainfo@imaworldhealth.org Web: www.imaworldhealth.org	IMA Medicine Box available for a fee. Some items for free with nominal handling fee.
Heart to Heart International, Inc. (HTHI)	401 South Clairborne, Suite 302 Olathe, KS 66062 Phone: 913-764-5200 info@hearttoheart.org Web: www.hearttoheart.org	Custom order supplies or pre-packaged "Box of Medicine" for \$500.
Crosslink International	427 North Maple Ave. Falls Church, VA Phone: 703-534-5465 info@crosslinkinternational.net www.crosslinkinternational.net	Provide medicines and equipment for projects. Some shipping overseas may be available. Some items free, based on availability.
FAME (Fellowship of Associates of Medical Evangelism)	P.O. Box 33548 Indianapolis, IN 46203 Phone: 317-358-2480 medicalmissions@FAMeworld.org www.FAMeworld.org	Supplies medications and medical supplies
Worm Project (WP)	c/o Franconia Mennonite Conference, Harleysville, PA Contact: Claude Good at: 267-932-6050 Ext. 136 info@wormproject.orgmailto:cgood@franconiaconference.org www.wormproject.org	Supplies albendazole antiparasite medications
Vitamin Angels	Santa Barbara, CA 93105 Phone: 805-565-9919 info@vitaminangels.org www.vitaminangels.org	Supplies Vitamin A, Multivitamins to the underserved free of cost.
Alcon Labs	http://www.alcon.com/corporate-responsibility/medical-missions.aspx	May supply medication free of charge; May need ministry of health letter or letter of invitation.

Reference

1. Herman, R. Christian Pharmacists Fellowship International. Missions Committee Progress Report. 2012.